

LOCAL STAR PROFILE (NO.9)

Following on from the great Stan Coleman in the last issue, we now turn the spotlight on someone who can only be described as a "Living Legend" in the running world. When this guy is on the starting line you know that there will only be the smaller pots to hunt for. His name alone sends shivers down the spine of many a veteran. What more can I say about someone who over the years has been and still is one of the best runners in Essex.

NAME: Andy Catton
AGE: ~~42~~ 60
CLUB: Ilford A.C.
OCCUPATION: Insurance Broker

What year did you start running? 1964

Why did you start running? It must have been in the blood! My father was a top county runner and my uncle (Edgar Moon) was a founder member of Ilford A.C.

Personal Bests:

Track

800 metres	1:55.1	(1980)
1,500 metres	3:48.4	(1979)
1 mile	4:09.2	(1977)
3,000 metres	8:03.0	(1978)
5,000 metres	13:45.3	(1980)
10,000 metres	28:57.4	(1980)

Road

1 mile	4:02.0	(1988)
5 miles	22:52.0	(1985)
10k	29:12.0	(1982)
10 miles	47:35.0	(1978)
½ marathon	1:05.0	(1986)
20 miles	1:46.25	(1987)
Marathon	2:19.54	(1985)

What championships and major races have you won along with the years?

- Southern Counties: 10,000m (x2); 10 miles (x3).
- Essex Championships: 1500m; 3000m; 5000m (x3); 10000m (x5); 10 miles (x5); 10k road (x2); 20 miles; cross-country; veterans cross country (x2) at M40 and x1 at M50
- Bruges European Grand Prix Veterans 10k (x3).
- Nike Grand Prix Road Race Series (x2).
- Cambridge Half Marathon.
- Roding Valley Half Marathon (x5).
- Rochester '5'.
- National M45 Half Marathon.

Favourite race and why? Great North Run - brilliant atmosphere, great support and an enjoyable weekend away with the lads.

Best performance? 47:35 in the Cambridge '10' because it was a solo run after ½ mile and if I hadn't doubled up with stomach cramp in the last ½ mile could have been 30 seconds faster.

Worst experience in running? Stomach cramp again. This time in the 1981 New York marathon at 20 miles when on course for a sub 2:15 clocking and having to jog/walk the last 6 miles.

Ilford's Mr Consistent

Andy Catton hopes to crown his hat-trick of wins in the Brugge Grand Prix with a world title on the course in '96

Words by Alastair Aitken and Martin Duff
Picture by Jeremy Hemming

ANDY CATTON has won the last three 10km veterans' road races at the prestigious Brugge Grand Prix, but will be doing extremely well to make it four in a row next June when the event incorporates the World Vets' Road Championships.

The Ilford runner has always been a force on the road and his powers, when fully fit, show no signs of diminishing, as was evident in the 1995 Brugge race.

"This year's race was the hardest of my three wins, without a doubt," said Catton. "There was a large group for most of the race, then just three of us battling it out with 300 metres to go. I found there was more quality this year.

"I will be back with a large group next year to compete in the World Championships."

British runners have won the last two events. Mike McLeod won at the NEC in 1992 while Nigel Gates won last year when the race was held in Toronto. The Brighton runner is likely to figure in Brugge next June, but Catton is the one with course knowledge.

Catton was disappointed with

his third place in this year's BVAf 10km at Coventry, which followed his Brugge victory. A repeat of his Brugge time (31:03), would have given him the title, but it was not to be and he had to settle for 32:00 and bronze.

Catton was inspired as a youngster by his father Jim, who was also a member of Ilford AC. Now 76, Catton senior won the Essex cross-country championship and was a regular rival of Jim Peters.

Catton junior repeated his father's Essex victory on more than one occasion and, in 1980 for instance, won with Graham Fell third and Eamonn Martin 12th. That year Catton went on to 17th in the Inter-Counties, 18th in the National, third fastest in the Southern 12-stage and the Essex 5000m in 14:06.

Catton, a director in the insurance industry, has been Insurance AA 10km track champion 10 times. He said: "Veteran athletics has been a new lease of life, but much harder than I anticipated."

If the long-time Ilford servant comes out on top in Brugge again next year, it may be everybody else who could justifiably repeat that claim.

